REMARKS

Applicants have amended the claims to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the invention. Applicants have cancelled claim 5 and have added new dependent claims 7-10. Upon entering the amendments, claims 1-4, and 6-10 will be pending in this application.

The Examiner rejected Claims 1-6 as being anticipated by Johnson et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,664,109. We believe, however, that Johnson does not teach or suggest every element of the claims, as amended.

For example, Johnson does not teach or suggest:

...converting the unconfirmed link for the selected record to a directional confirmed link identifying which of the selected record and the linked record identified by the unconfirmed link for the selected record is a leader record, wherein the leader record among two linked records is the record among the two linked records that is at least one of most current, most correct, and most proper,

as recited in the claim 1, as amended.

We note that original claim 5, which is now canceled, did refer to confirmed links and the Examiner seemed to argue that Johnson discloses confirmed links. In support of his position, the Examiner directed our attention to the following excerpt from Johnson:

A high degree of confidence in the match to the patient identifier is required to unconditionally link the document to a patient. If there is some degree of matching, though not of a type to create a high degree of confidence (e.g., a name only), a conditional or fuzzy link may be made as indicated by decision step 618. Generally, an exact match between the extracted value of the extracted data item and the data stored in the corresponding field of the MPI database is not always possible or expected. For each field there is maintained a definition of what constitutes a match for that field. For example, a patient name extracted from the document will be compared against the patient name stored in the MPI database and patient aliases stored in the MPI database, for names with the same or similar spellings or that sound similar. Exact matches are given stronger weight than close matches. The weight of individual field matches for any one particular patient record is then totaled to determine the strength of the match. The weight given to the match in each field and the total strength of the match to a patient can also be varied. A fuzzy link will be made only to the patient record having the strongest match if that match exceeds the threshold for making a conditional match. A fuzzy link can then be reviewed later to either break the link or to remove the condition when additional or updated information on the patient or document is obtained. (Col. 11, line 63 to col. 12, line 21).

5

In that passage, Johnson does indeed refer to links. However, none of the links mentioned by Johnson in that passage or anywhere else is "a directional confirmed link identifying which of the selected record and the linked record identified by the unconfirmed link for the selected record is a leader record." Johnson merely discloses that "the repository links the document to a patient … [and d]ocuments for a patient are retrieved by identifying the patient using demographic data" (Abstract).

For at least the reasons stated above, we believe that the claims are in condition for allowance and therefore ask the Examiner to allow them to issue.

Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account No. 08-0219, under Order No. 2000874.00161 US1 from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: October 1, 2008

Eric L. Prahl
Registration No.: 32,590
Attorney for Applicant(s)

Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr LLP
60 State Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02109
(617) 526-6000 (telephone)
(617) 526-5000 (facsimile)

6